even be something recalcitrant about Shakespeare's drama that makes it a risky proposition in the more domestic context. Neil Taylor provides a more detailed analysis of the differing approaches of two directors involved in the BBC series, Jane Howell and Elijah Moshinsky.

Stuart Evans writes with an elegant evocativeness about the now virtually lost delights of Shakespeare on radio. I am surely not alone in having received my first experience of Shakespeare in performance through the medium of radio, and I cannot regret that I received a training for the imagination that may be surprisingly close to that exercised by the first Elizabethan audiences. As a child listening to the Australian Broadcasting Commission's ambitious radio presentation of the whole canon, I was made keenly aware of the sheer power of Shakespeare's language as in itself a medium that could create visual and auditory effects. In this sense alone, Evans's account of the English radio performances is unbalanced towards sometimes gratuitous sound effects.

Shakespeare Survey always includes a handful of articles not devoted to its annual theme. Edward Pechter develops his own distinctive brand of metacriticism in examining *Hamlet*. Beginning with an astute attention to the play's strategy of characters repeating valedictions, he concludes with some large suggestions about *Hamlet* as myth, inviting us to fill its lacunae with our memories and desires. Rosalind King makes us aware of the surprisingly considerable amount of actual music there is in *Othello* as well as verbal imagery, and she offers sensible suggestions about the structural function of these occurrences. Wilson Knight's subject, 'The Othello Music', turns out to be more fertile than ever when it is taken literally instead of metaphorically. David Armitage traces Ovid's presence in the last plays, Robert Wiltenburg finds a large debt to the *Aeneid* in *The Tempest*. James Gibbs looks at influence in the other direction, in an essay which finds the creative presence of Shakespeare behind the plays of Wole Soyinka.

University of Western Australia R. S. WHITE

The Lady of Pleasure. By JAMES SHIRLEY. Edited by RONALD HUEBERT. Pp. xii+208 (The Revels Plays). Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986. £29·95 net.

The Cardinal. By JAMES SHIRLEY. Edited by E. M. YEARLING. Pp. x+166 (The Revels Plays). Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986. £29·95 net.

These two texts are welcome additions to the Revels Plays, and bring the number of volumes in the series up to forty. Each of the editions under review presents a thorough and careful account of the textual situation, and the editors have undertaken the labour of extensive collation, only underestimated by those who have never done any themselves. Both editors serve the reader well, though Ronald Huebert inclines to be self-indulgent in his commentary notes now and again, where mildly interesting but rather long excerpts are cited in illustration of words or phrases adequately glossed already: nine lines from Burton to show that the pulse was thought an index of erotic interest, or nine lines on speculations as to the identity of a painter referred to as 'The Belgic gentleman', are instances of excessive if amusing annotation. James Shirley is a dramatist who needs generally little annotation. Elizabeth Yearling shows excellent judgement in this respect. Each editor has made the commentary relate to the General Introduction, following up issues broached there: thus Ronald Huebert quotes from Lawrence Stone on the social history of the period to good effect, and Elizabeth Yearling has a good ear for echoes of Middleton or Webster.

Both editors are attentive to staging, and Stage Directions and attribution of speeches are carefully handled in the text itself. An alternative Prologue to *The*

Cardinal is given in an appendix, and so is some music for the song in Act V. *The Lady of Pleasure* has a careful appendix on the Cockpit theatre, with an illustration from the Jones/Webb theatre project drawings. The accounts of the Caroline theatre in these two editions are complementary, since Huebert gives more attention to questions of staging, and Elizabeth Yearling to dramatic style. The editors concur in not wishing to present Shirley as a misunderstood or unfairly underestimated dramatist, though both emphasize that he has been rarely performed and that his style and concerns have not been easily recognized. Although neither edition is likely to change the status of Shirley in relation to his fellow writers, they both point to the special characteristics of Shirley's art which remain difficult to appreciate.

The question is topical since very recently Jonson's Caroline comedy *The New Inn* appeared in the Revels Plays, and is in current repertory at the Swan theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, along with a comedy of Shirley's, *Hyde Park*. It has to be admitted that the Royal Shakespeare Company has not made the task of recognizing the special quality of Shirley's art any easier by setting *Hyde Park* in the Edwardian period (a similar disappointment was the setting of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, the previous season, in medieval Japan). Perhaps, however, the reason for this directorial evasiveness is precisely that Shirley is a difficult dramatist, or rather that he has indeed a style of his own: there is no continuous dramatic tradition of staging his plays, and even the RSC, currently playing late Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Tourneur, as well as Jonson's *New Inn*, had not time or imagination to evolve a new style, while recognizing that neither Jonson nor Etherege (for whom playing traditions exist) would be appropriate without modification. Because of the absence of a tradition of performing Caroline plays, and a relative neglect by scholars and critics until recently (where Philip Edwards, Michael Neill, and Martin Butler have made advances) this remains still the least well understood area of English dramatic literature.

It is much to the credit of these two editors of Shirley that they devote much attention, and imaginative insight, to the question of the plays in performance, but we are clearly a long way from possessing, for Caroline drama, the kind of inwardness exhibited in relation to Restoration theatre by Jocelyn Powell, in his excellent new study of that subject (Routledge, 1986). Still, Rónald Huebert not only devotes space to an account of the structure of the stage on which his play was originally performed, he also offers a section of the Introduction on 'The Playwright's Craft', giving a close commentary on a number of particular scenes, where the economy of simple, strong visual events, clear language, and complex patterning of motives and currents of feeling gives some actual meaning to the vague historian's term 'transitional style'.

In her edition of *The Cardinal* Elizabeth Yearling concentrates on Shirley's deliberate avoidance of the spectacular. Her account of the play's recent stage history in the United Kingdom and the United States shows directors refusing to accept this key feature of Shirley's art, preferring to make him a latter-day Webster: both performances discussed went to great trouble to stage events Shirley kept off stage. Shirley is cool, but prompts active thinking in his audiences. In *The Cardinal* Elizabeth Yearling persuasively argues that Shirley was less interested in the murder of Alvarez than in its aftermath, with the surprising turns of the king's mind providing an absorbing dramatic event in itself, while Ronald Huebert notices how the reconciliation between Bornwell and his prodigal unfaithful wife in *The Lady of Pleasure* remains a *question*: the couple withdraw off stage, and when they return appear reconciled, but 'Are we to assume that Aretina has told him the whole truth, and that he feels the injury no more deeply than this? Or must we believe that Aretina, though presenting herself as a "Penitent" (V iii 176) has been prudently selective in her confession?', as Huebert asks. One may hazard the suggestion that it may be a

strength of Shirley's dramatic style that it provides no answer to these questions: it does seem consistent with other features of his art and his relation to his predecessors. Some serious productions of his plays might help to develop some sense of his theatre.

This review must end by expressing deep regret at the untimely death of the editor Elizabeth Yearling.

University of Zurich BRIAN GIBBONS

John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic. By CHARLES MARTINDALE. Pp. xiv+240. Beckenham: Croom Helm Ltd., 1986. £22·50 net.

Innocent as it is of contemporary theoretical studies of literary imitation by such critics as Thomas Greene and Harold Bloom, this comprehensive re-assessment of Milton's debts to ancient epic will appear to some readers to be hopelessly old-fashioned. To others, including this reviewer, it will come as a welcome relief from, and corrective to, the over-ingenuity of much recent commentary on the relationship of *Paradise Lost* to the epic tradition. For despite its imposing title, *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* belongs to what a distinguished American scholar once called the 'Oh come now!' school of literary criticism. As the author puts it himself on the opening page of his preface, 'a mountain of innovative scholarship . . . has been piled over *Paradise Lost*; if no more I hope to have pulled down some part of it again.'

Dr Martindale's chief weapons in carrying out this Herculean enterprise are good sense, sound scholarship, and a healthy streak of scepticism. In his introductory chapter, for instance, he draws a useful distinction between allusions to specific passages in the works of the ancient poets and more general references to such traditional epic topoi as the council of war. To treat the latter as if they were the former, he warns, is to run the risk of misunderstanding not only Milton's text but his poetic method itself. No less grave, Dr Martindale goes on to argue, are the misunderstandings generated by the common critical assumption 'that an allusion necessarily brings in its train the whole context of the original' (p. 13). For as he points out, the widespread use of classical florilegia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not to mention the common Renaissance practice of collecting favourite passages in commonplace books, may well have served to *dis*courage precisely the kind of contextualization upon which so many modern interpretations of *Paradise Lost* have been based. 'There is no magic key to Milton's practice in imitation and allusion,' Dr Martindale sensibly concludes. 'Every case must be considered on its own merits; there can be no substitute for common sense and judgement' (p. 20).

Both qualities are in ample evidence in the following four chapters on Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Lucan respectively. In his treatment of Ovid, for example, the author rightly cautions against an over-reliance on the various allegorical and typological readings of the *Metamorphoses* available in Renaissance commentaries and editions. At a time when literary criticism was in its infancy, he observes, 'much that was felt would not find ready expression, or would find expression only in direct imitation' (p. 158). Milton's Ovid is likely to have been both broader and deeper than the Ovid of the commentators.

Throughout his analysis Dr Martindale brings to bear on his subject a classicist's sensitivity to the tone and style of ancient poetry. The emphasis is quite deliberate, for in his own words 'the loss of deep natural familiarity with classical texts has often resulted in a preoccupation with supposed verbal allusions at the expense of more widely diffused influence in matters of style and decorum' (p. 184). In order to correct the balance Dr Martindale spends much of his time on the latter topics. Indeed, in his